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# THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Board

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**Draft Public Participation Plan  
September 1991**

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT  
COLLECTION

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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT BOARD  
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**Second Draft: Public Participation Plan  
September 1991**

Please send all comments to Harry E. Manasewich, Public Participation Coordinator.

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**I. Purpose of Plan**

This plan establishes a framework for effective public participation in the decisions of the Management Board. It has been built upon the premise that people have a right to be involved, and should be involved, in decisions that could effect them. It outlines a program of two-way communication opportunities to inform, educate, and solicit involvement from citizens of the Commonwealth. It is meant to be dynamic, evolutionary, and open to modification based on citizen advice and changing needs.

It should also be noted, that although most of the activities described here are intended to be implemented throughout the life of the Management Board, some activities are not applicable if the Management Board determines that siting a LLW storage, treatment, or disposal facility in Massachusetts is unnecessary. In that event, the plan will be modified accordingly.

Some of the activities outlined here are mandated by law. However, as evidenced by this plan, the Management Board supports public participation beyond the mandates of the law. For example, MGL c.111H requires six consolidated public meetings to be held prior to the adoption of regulations and the Management Plan. This plan adds a series of small group

briefings and other meetings to be held before the consolidated public meetings take place.

The Management Board strongly believes that the public's view should be sought before important decisions are made. Decisions can be both technically better and socially more workable when a public participation program is properly implemented. This policy underlies the following public participation plan goals.

### **Public Participation Plan Goals**

- A. To establish an interactive process of citizen involvement in the Management Board's decision-making which is based upon continual and open two-way communications, education, and bona fide efforts to address collective concerns.**
- B. To enable the citizens of the Commonwealth to assist the Management Board in reaching well-informed, technically sound, publicly responsive decisions that can be successfully implemented.**
- C. To provide relevant information to the public. Information about the various aspects of low-level radioactive waste management is essential to an understanding of the issues involved. This understanding can help the public make balanced assessments of the issues and provide informed opinions.**

### **II. Mechanisms and Procedures to Accomplish Goals**

The plan outlined below is intended to realize the goals noted above and is divided into three principal activities as follows:

- A) Establishing a communications infrastructure
- B) Developing information materials and education program
- C) Instituting a community and citizen outreach program

The activities detailed in this plan are not without limitations. Although a comprehensive public participation program is outlined, it is not the intent of this plan to implement each activity state-wide and simultaneously. Rather, appropriate elements will be implemented as conditions warrant and financial constraints allow.

## **A. Establishing a Communications Infrastructure**

The Management Board views establishing and maintaining effective two-way communications as the cornerstone of public participation. This section sets forth the basic components of a communications infrastructure designed to verify that the public's concerns are being identified and addressed.

### **Communications Network**

Objective:

To establish and maintain quick, easy, and clear lines of two-way communications between communities/citizens/organizations/others and the Management Board.

Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Create telecommunications tree; for information exchange, notifications
- \* Establish computer electronic bulletin board
- \* Network with organizations interested in LLW issues

### **Public Concern Tracking System**

Objective:

To develop a system that tracks the content and source of public concern and documents how this concern is addressed.

Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Board minutes
- \* Periodic reports
- \* Correspondence
- \* Computerized data-base

### **Media Relations**

Objective:

To promote accurate and complete media coverage of LLW issues by providing a forum for the informal exchange of information.

Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Media workshops
- \* Ongoing preparation of issues-oriented and background press releases on major issues
- \* Meetings with editorial boards to discuss critical issues; follow-up with reporters covering issues
- \* Press interviews on request
- \* Tape and distribute process and issue-oriented public service announcements



- \* Newspaper inserts in potential site communities (if siting goes forth)

### Coordination With Other Involved Agencies

#### Objective:

To coordinate the public participation efforts of the Management Board, the state Department of Environmental Protection and the state Department of Public Health. In addition to the Management Board, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs-Department of Environmental Protection and Executive Office of Human Services-Department of Public Health share a responsibility to inform and involve the public in their parts of the overall LLW management process. Coordinating these efforts are vital to the successful implementation of a public participation program.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

To achieve a coordinated public participation program, a working group of appropriate staff from DPH and DEP will meet as necessary with the PPC to discuss public participation activities, to coordinate information and activities, and to discuss the public issues common to all of the agencies' programs and activities. The PPC will make recommendations and assist each agency in the development of plans for public participation (noted in MGL c.111H 6(b)). Where appropriate, public participation activities will be jointly sponsored, and representatives of all involved agencies will attend and participate in related events. DPH and DEP will agree on protocols necessary to allow the PPC to serve as lead LLW public participation facilitator for all agencies.

### Mailing List

#### Objective:

To establish a mailing list for the receipt of Management Board correspondence, information, and announcements.

At a minimum, the mailing list will include the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the following:

- \* All municipal chief executive officers
- \* All boards of selectmen/aldermen, and city councils
- \* All municipal boards of health
- \* All municipal fire chiefs
- \* All municipal planning boards
- \* All city and town planning departments
- \* All regional planning agencies
- \* All local conservation commissions
- \* Municipal hazardous waste coordinators

- \* University environmental, engineering, and physics faculty and student groups
- \* High school science department heads and science teachers
- \* All members, Massachusetts Legislature
- \* Heads of state-wide municipal, environmental and health organizations
- \* Heads of all Chambers of Commerce
- \* CEO's and radiation safety officers of all radioactive materials users in the Commonwealth
- \* Hospital CEO's and auxiliary association heads
- \* Members of professional societies
- \* State and local League of Women Voters officers
- \* Television and radio stations
- \* Newspapers
- \* Local cable TV stations
- \* Citizens expressing interest or requesting regular mailings

### Quarterly Newsletters

#### Objective:

To produce a quarterly newsletter with information on the current status of issues that are important to LLW management. This newsletter will be free and widely distributed.

#### Typical Issues To Be Covered Include:

- \* What is LLW
- \* Legal and regulatory framework of state and federal LLW laws
- \* Brief introduction of Management Board members
- \* Importance of public participation
- \* Introduction of Public Participation Coordinator
- \* Outreach efforts
- \* Board efforts to address public input
- \* LLW issues
- \* How LLW is currently managed

## **B. Education and Information**

The Management Board views education and information as critical components of public participation. Information about the various aspects of LLW management and the siting process (if applicable) is essential to understanding the technical concerns and other issues involved. Armed with clear and objective information regarding LLW management issues and the public participation process, citizens will be able to formulate

independent opinions and have them effectively addressed. The activities outlined below are designed to provide this information.

### School System Program

#### Objective:

Assist in educating secondary school students on the fundamentals of radiation, radioactive waste management issues, and related topics.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Lectures, demonstrations, video presentations
- \* Develop curriculum units or teachers workshop:
  - For use by secondary school teachers

### Public Information Materials

#### Objective:

To provide a variety of public information material that support the Management Boards' public information and outreach activities.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Develop informational packets, guidance documents, and fact sheets for distribution to citizens, media, local officials, environmental, health, and related organizations. Typical documents to be produced may include:
  - Fact sheets on LLW issues and siting process (if applicable)
  - Radiation facts
  - Management Board responsibilities
  - Federal mandates
  - Role of public in citizen participation
  - How the management of LLW affects the public, the environment, and the economy
  - Safe technologies for LLW disposal
  - Biographies of Management Board members and key staff
  - Summaries of MGL c.111H
  - Public Participation Plan
  - Management Board newsletter
  - Explanation of regulations
  - Site selection process (if applicable)
  - Synopses of various processes and how to get involved
  - Interaction of federal, state, and local laws in regards to LLW



### Low-level Radioactive Material Users and Generators Round-Table

#### Objective:

To augment ongoing meetings with LLW generators, establish ad hoc round-table meetings of LLW material users and generators to exchange information about LLW management issues, to point out impacts (positive, negative, health, safety, economic), alternatives, and how their involvement will affect the process, stressing the importance of their roles.

### Low-Level Radioactive Waste Information Resource Center

#### Objective:

To establish and maintain a library of documents pertaining to LLW management in Massachusetts and other states at the office of the Management Board. These documents will be available for public use. Copies will be provided to interested citizens upon request and availability.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanism

- \* Coordinate information dissemination with the Department of Environmental Protection who, pursuant to section 14 of Chapter 111H, is required to establish a state-wide resource center for the continual collection of data pertaining to site selection (if applicable).

### Facility Site Visits

#### Objective:

To assist Community Supervisory Committee members and other interested persons in gaining a better understanding of LLW management, through visits to existing LLW sites in other areas (if siting goes forth).

## C. Outreach Activities

Creating opportunities to explain regulations and processes, answer questions, and seek public input from people that live and work, or have a vested interest in Massachusetts, is a priority of the Management Board. These opportunities will be encouraged by implementing the activities noted below.

### Speakers Bureau

#### Objective:

To provide speakers on LLW management or issues to groups who request them.



#### Potential Implementation mechanism

- \* Speakers to be drawn from Management Board members, staff, university faculty, physicians, health physicists, and others willing to give presentations about LLW management or issues.

#### Small Group Presentations

##### Objective:

To conduct ongoing informal presentations and consultations with decision makers, environmental groups, health organizations, government leaders, civic groups, Chambers of Commerce, and others to provide information about Management Board activities, and to solicit public opinion regarding these activities.

##### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Conduct small group meetings and presentations in selected areas of the state
- \* If siting proceeds, these meetings will be held frequently in the areas of possible locations which are likely to contain one or more candidate sites, and in areas of candidate sites.

#### Briefings for legislators, state agencies, local officials, and others

##### Objective:

To maintain continued information and involvement opportunities for state legislators, state agencies, local officials, and others on all aspects of Management Board activities.

##### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Send copies of information materials and key program documents to members of the state Legislature, state agencies, local officials, and others.
- \* Sponsor information briefings for legislators, local officials, and others interested in LLW management.

#### Community Supervisory Committees (CSC's) (per MGL c.111H, section 21)

##### Objective:

To facilitate and maximize participation of CSC's in Management Board activities. MGL c.111H recognizes the importance for local involvement in any decision that could effect their community. Thus, it established a mechanism for a potentially-affected community to assess the local impact of site development and to communicate its view to the appropriate parties. This will only take affect if siting goes forth.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Assist communities in establishing a CSC
- \* Assist communities to understand operating ground-rules established by Management Board
- \* Outline technical assistance to be provided by Management Board
- \* Assist members to understand their responsibilities, the steps in the process, schedule, when and how the Management Board will incorporate CSC input into their decisions.

#### Local Information Offices (if siting process initiated)

##### Objective:

To establish an office to assist residents in candidate sites to follow the range of activities that will take place during site characterization and to understand how further decisions will be made.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Work with and through municipal officials to locate space
- \* Initiate opening immediately following selection of the candidate sites
- \* Staff by public participation specialist
- \* Information displays
- \* Strive to have space used as community resource

#### Public Participation Advisory Committee

##### Objective:

In accordance with M.G.L.c.111H, section 6(d), which calls for the creation of this committee, to establish a committee that will advise and assist the Public Participation Coordinator in establishing and conducting public information programs, as well as developing procedures to be used to achieve a fair and effective process of public participation.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Establish advisory committee of persons representing the range of public opinion concerning low-level radioactive waste or its management.
- \* ***Due to the pressing need for the contributions of this committee, a specific proposal for its formulation is currently being developed.***

#### Ad Hoc Panels

##### Objective:

To create ad hoc panels as necessary to focus on specialized issues.

### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Establish informal groups of technical experts, municipal leaders, others, as necessary to advise Management Board staff.

### Workshops

#### Objective:

To organize workshops on LLW issues of interest to local citizens. This is in recognition that public participation must be a dialogue.

#### Topics may include:

- \* Basic radiation facts
- \* Public health, safety, and uses of radioactive materials in Massachusetts
- \* Environmental protection
- \* Waste minimization
- \* Storage, treatment, and disposal technology
- \* The siting process (if applicable)

### Meetings

#### Management Board Meetings

##### Objective:

To help ensure citizen participation in Management Board activities, regardless of their geographic location, by conducting some of the regular business meetings of the Management Board at various locations around the state.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanisms

- \* Place notices in local papers
- \* Use mailing list to notify citizens and groups in area
- \* Record meetings (audio or video tape); tapes to be available for loan at Management Board office, Boston Public Library, University of Massachusetts at Amherst library, Springfield City Library, Worcester Public Library, and the Pittsfield Public Library.

### Public Meetings

#### Objective:

To conduct statutorily mandated public meetings to explain items proposed, answer questions, and to solicit public opinion.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanism

- \* The Management Board will hold public meetings on all major decisions, regulations, plans, and reports in order to receive comments from as broad a spectrum of the public as possible. These public meetings are more expansive than



public hearings because they allow a dialogue to occur. Public meetings defined in Chapter 111H require an agency to present information, hear testimony and respond to inquiries. In contrast, public hearings only allow testimony to be received. The Board will widely advertise and publicize its public meetings, circulate information on the topics to be considered and discussed, and use the public meetings as forums for listening and responding to the public. The Board will work with communities to set the agendas and ground-rules for the public meetings.

### Briefings and Other Meetings

#### Objective:

To conduct small group briefings and meetings to more fully explain items to be discussed at the larger statutorily mandated public meetings.

#### Potential Implementation Mechanism

- \* Prior to conducting public meetings, and as an integral component of the public review process, briefings and meetings will be held to describe the purpose and content of the material to be considered at the hearings. The Management Board recognizes formal public meetings may not give all citizens the opportunity to fully understand the content of the materials. Therefore, briefing sessions and question-and-answer meetings will be held prior to, and following, statutorily-required public meetings at various locations around the state, as time permits. Communities will also be asked what types of forums they prefer, and be encouraged to work with the PPC to develop a process of participation with which they are comfortable. Subsequent meetings will explain how previous community input was addressed.

### General Public Notification Process

The Management Board will hold briefings and public meetings on all major regulations, plans, decisions, and reports as outlined above. The overall process regarding the announcement of these events is described below. In addition, the Management Board will be guided by a policy to notify communities and their leaders as soon as possible about decisions that may effect them.



### Preceding Announcement

1. The Management Board will send notifications to all persons and groups on the mailing list in the area of the public meeting. Notification will contain dates, times, locations of public meetings, and allow sufficient time for citizens to make arrangements to attend.
2. The Management Board will send press releases to pertinent newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. Releases will include notice of press conference and availability of press conference packets.

### Day of Announcement

1. A press conference will be held announcing decision, document, or report, and dates of public meetings to explain them and receive comments. As applicable, the Management Board, DPH and DEP, will conduct presentations to explain implications of the decision, document, or report.
2. An informational packet will be mailed to all press (newspapers, radio, TV, cable) in vicinity of public meetings with press release announcing meeting schedule.

### Before Public Meetings Begin

1. A press release will be sent to local media in vicinity of public meetings and selected major media. The public's role in LLW management will be explained.
2. Follow-up calls will be made to local officials, local organizations, and local media in vicinity of public meetings, requesting their attendance and participation.
3. Materials available at the meetings will include:
  - Informational packets
  - Public Comment Forms
  - Extra press releases
  - Copies of the material or decisions to be reviewed

### Following Public Meetings

1. The PPC will organize public comments for Management Board review.

2. The Management Board will inform, personally (if possible), by letter and other means, all impacted CEO's concerning its major decisions, reports, or documents, and offer the services of the Management Board and the PPC. Meetings will be held to discuss each major decision, report, or document and to solicit input from CEO's prior to the next step.
3. The Management Board will issue press releases explaining significance of major decision, report, or document to newspapers, TV, radio stations, and selected media as appropriate.
4. The PPC will issue a brief report concerning how public input was utilized to persons that offered input.
5. Copies of the decision or document will be sent to all impacted municipal CEO's and all municipal libraries of impacted communities.
6. The Management Board will conduct workshops or small group meetings, prior to next step, to:
  - \* provide information
  - \* answer additional questions
  - \* listen and learn concerns from the public

### **III. Conclusion**

The activities detailed in this plan serve as the foundation for fulfilling the Commonwealths' commitment to public participation. Comments and advice on these activities are needed on an on-going basis, including how they should be structured and what other mechanisms for public participation might be needed. These comments are vital because as the process of implementing the Massachusetts Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Act evolves, public participation activities will be modified in response to changing needs. Ultimately, managing LLW in a safe and publicly acceptable manner in Massachusetts depends on citizen input.